

Grigorij Ya. Solganic
Moscow State Lomonosov University

The Appropriateness of Newspaper Language Development in the 20th Century

The problem of media language development is very complicated and diverse. While much scientific research touches upon various spheres of the language, its nature and specifics, research in the field of the media language evolution is almost absent. This may be explained: We cannot be absolutely sure of the motivation of media language evolution, of the periods of this process, and, what is most important, of the parameters of media texts analysis. There is still no valid method for this analysis as well as for the stylistic analysis of the texts in general.

The subject of the present analysis is newspaper language. We suppose that the appropriateness of newspaper language development in general satisfies other media.

What determines the development of the newspaper language? What is the motive power of its evolution?

Of course, extra linguistic factors such as social process influence language greatly.

Media language reacts delicately to social changes, which first of all is reflected by altering newspaper vocabulary key words. Key words mirror the ideology, policy, and social vector of the paper and are closely connected to its influence on the audience. Other spheres of the vocabulary also change. Many researchers notice that this flexibility of newspaper language is a consequence of its informing function, which is to report current events (first of all of the socially important facts).

So, the first aspect (vector) of newspaper language development is connected to the influence of the extra linguistic (social) factors.

Besides extra-linguistic factors, the development of the language is determined by its natural laws, first of all by the tendency to the social evaluation of the language means (the second aspect, vector). Social evaluation is one of the most important spheres of newspaper language semantics, the field where natural factors of the development reveal themselves. The characteristics of the evaluation (direct, indirect, hidden, ironical, etc.) determine the lexical movement: appearance of new words; likewise, the disappearance of many other lexical units, that is, their movement into the passive vocabulary.

Newspaper language development is determined by the mutual influence of external and internal linguistic factors. Newspaper language laws are preserved for the period of the newspaper's existence, but they are reflected differently in various historical epochs. The lexical content changes: the lexical kernel, the evaluating vocabulary – but the whole structure of newspaper vocabulary is preserved: The speech technique is being improved, the fund of effective cliché is growing, and the spectrum of the evaluating colours is becoming more and more diverse.

Newspaper language development has evolutionary characteristics. Changes begin in vocabulary and slightly touch upon grammar. We may speak only about activating one or other parts of grammar or of displacing the grammar form and category productivity.

Vocabulary is the most flexible part of newspaper language. Under the influence of scientific progress and culture changes, it is rapidly filled by new words. Aging of the newspaper vocabulary also happens very quickly. In comparison with other types of literary language, the evolution of newspaper vocabulary is the most active process, which determines the influence of newspaper language on literary speech. Despite the flexibility of the vocabulary, the characteristics of word use remain unaltered (the tendency to social evaluation, the tendency to standardisation, etc.).

The least prone to changes are key words and system vocabulary. They are preserved for the period, and changes of these vocabulary units (especially the system vocabulary) are one of the indications that a new period is beginning.

The analysis of newspaper language over a long-term period (a century) requires determining a satisfying method and parameters that are relevant to the newspaper language and adequate for its specifics, thus allowing the characterisation of not only separate texts but also of the whole period of newspaper language development. It is obvious that these parameters must be broad enough, in general, to include as many as possible linguistic facts.

First of all, one of these parameters is the type of authorship. The importance of this category is that it determines not only the style of specific texts but also the style of the epoch (period). Each period is characterised by a general idea of the author and his ideal image. The category of authorship is the result of the influence of extra and internal processes in newspaper language. This category is a mediator between external and internal linguistic factors. Being formed by the mutual influence of these factors, the category of authorship strongly influences newspaper language.

The essence of this category contains two sides: a social person and a private person. Though they can hardly be observed separately, the essence of the authorship is determined by the correlation of these two sides. These are marginal points, two poles, between which we can observe many different examples.

The author is the most important style-forming factor of newspaper text. He concentrates major style vectors and epoch tendencies. Each epoch creates its own general author type, which is realised in many various newspaper texts (for details, see Solganik 2001).

The second important parameter of the analysis, connected with the first, is the character of speech. Speech includes personal and typical characteristics: It reveals the category of authorship, the author's idea and style, and many other details. Speech mirrors the language vector and the stylistic manner of the writer. When summarising the analysis of various texts, we can conclude the characteristics of speech of a specific period and the tendencies of language development.

One of the important parts of this parameter is textual modality and the level of textual standardisation. Textual modality is the realisation of the category

of authorship in newspaper texts. It characterises the level of subjectivity of texts, correlation of subjective and objective elements, and the level of disclosure of the author's personality. It determines the general tone of texts and the author's attitude to reality and speech, which reflects reality.

The standardisation level characterises the correlation of typical and creative and of standard and freshness in writing. This sign is very important for the general characteristic of speech and for revealing the creative resources and the condition of newspaper language of any period. Textual modality and level of text standardisation might provide a clear and full image of newspaper discourse of the epoch.

The third parameter is the key words complex. It characterises the content and the language of the newspaper. Key words characterise ideology and policy of a newspaper and public speech of any period, in general. The correlation of key words with evaluating and system words is also important. A high percentage of evaluating or system words speaks for a special language tendency.

The complex of these three parameters (type of authorship, character of speech, and correlation of vocabulary types) can provide a general idea of newspaper language of any historical period.

These parameters may also serve as the criteria to distinguish between different periods of newspaper language development. Radical changes of these parameters – forming a new type of author, changing the character of speech and key words, changing the correlation of key, evaluating, and system words – mean that one period was replaced by another.

Let us characterise each period beginning in 1917.

The revolution of 1917 changed language so much that it is still an open question whether these changes were revolutionary or evolutionary. Was it the language of the revolution or the revolution of the language? This question was posed by a famous Russian linguist, Kartsevsky, in his brochure devoted to general processes in the Russian language at the time of World War I and the revolution (published in Berlin, 1923). Kartsevsky supposed

that there was no reason to speak about the revolution of the language (Kartsevsky 1923, p. 69).

But the changes in vocabulary and phraseology were so rapid and essential that “their birth is revolutionary birth *sui generis*, because the well seen evolution of the linguistic forms had given no reason to preview them” (Vinokur 1929, p. 118-119).

One of these fresh streams in newspaper language, which are considered revolutionary by Vinokur, was a large number of new words. During the military communism period, the idea of the speech process was very simple – “everything must be renamed in a revolutionary way” (1929, p. 122). This idea is the source of the large number of abbreviations.

The wide spread of military terms (primarily in a figurative sense) was also new to newspaper language. Selishev (1928) noted this feature as well as neologisms, archaisms, and foreign words.

Use of military terms is very important – they depict dynamism and the romantic, straightforward spirit of the revolution. After appearing in the first years of revolution, they remained in newspaper language and are characteristic of it.

The first period of newspaper language of the 20th century (1917 – end-1920s) may be defined as the period of the formation of new quality, new looks; the period of search for new expressive means, satisfying the needs of the epoch. The revolution changed old norms and schemes and posed a question: What should a new language be like?

The press of the 1920s discussed contemporary newspaper language. Many people claimed it was not clear and understandable for common people. Many journalists considered it important to give up traditional literary language.

The evaluations of newspaper language were often too marginal. They represented unprofessional, undifferentiated, and abstract attitudes towards newspaper language.

During this period, very important changes of newspaper language took place. Later, they influenced further the development of the language and made media language a specific literary unit. This process is the rise of evaluation means and the separation of the evaluation means for ideological reasons.

Vinokur (1929) speaks about the evaluating vocabulary diversification although he does not pay much attention to it. "Military communism – as it revealed its specifics in the language – knew only one social category inside itself. It was "the good thing". Everything "bad" existed only in the enemies' world" (p. 122).

The revolutionary phraseology showed even more influence of the evaluation on newspaper language:

Religion is opium for the people!
Peace to the huts – war to the palaces!
Down with the imperialistic war!
A worker can lose nothing but his fetters!
Long live the self-determination of the peoples!

All this phraseology (as well as terms of Marxist and narodnik ideology) left small-group vocabularies and became common to everyone.

Diversification of the social evaluation is the main feature of vocabulary and phraseology, especially of political phraseology. It was widely used in newspaper language and became the essential process, which almost created the image of press of the epoch.

During this first period of newspaper development, a new image of the author was formed. It accumulated the named features and determined the characteristics of the language processes.

The generalised author of this period is first of all a person with a revolutionary, class mind, who looks at the world around him from the narrow-class communist point of view. His attitude is simple: He does not know "semitones" or alternatives; his speech is usually slogan-styled.

The people is understood as a mass (the word 'mass' is used much more often than 'the people'), a passive object that must be nurtured and influenced, into whose heads the communist must hammer the key slogans. If we look at the two sides of an author (a social being, a private person), we will see that the social being prevails. He is revolutionary, radical, unfriendly, intolerant, and cruel. That is the general image of the author of this period.

The second period (1930s – beginning 1980s) is the period of forming language norms in newspaper language, the period of conservation that leads to template. It is the period of forming the language of the Soviet times, which was called the totalitarian language.¹

The general vector of newspaper language development during Soviet times is strong ideology and the prevailingness of politics in the content.

Language not only depicts and names ideological and political terms but also strongly influences the socialisation of people, the construction of their mentality, and manipulates the public mind.

The influence of ideology and politics on totalitarian language development may be well seen in various linguistic processes. In semantics, it is first the broadening and emptying of a word's meaning and introducing into it new narrow ideological components.

The flexible, wide, and uncertain meaning of a word became the perfect material for the formation of new political significance. And of course, this process first touches ideological and conceptual words that served to express the ideology.

The specific of the conceptual and socially important word development is its dependence on social groups and ideas. "That is why, apart from the basic

¹ During this period (and almost common in the sphere of language), we should emphasise the years of World War II (1941–1945). During the war, the emotional and rhetorical vector became stronger; the pathetic agitating means (such as actualising the archaisms etc.) were widely spread, and the personification of speech became more important. This period must be reviewed separately. For example, see Kozhin, A.N.: *Periphrases as Style Feature of the Public Speech* (*Perifraz kak snilisticheskoje sredstvo publitsisticheskij rechi*). In: *Uchenye Zapiski MOPI im. N.K. Krupskoj*, 1964, Vol. 148.

meaning, each word of this kind had another significance connected with a different, sometimes opposite, understanding of the word's notion" (Veselit-sky 1964, p. 125-126).

An important feature of totalitarian language is the sharp and open political evaluation of conceptual words and their clear division into "ours" and "not ours". On one side (according to the Frequency Dictionary of Newspaper Vocabulary) are positive words: *labour, peace, socialism, communism, the party, Marxism, Leninism, social competition*, etc. On the other side, there are words with ideologically negative notions: *imperialism, imperialistic, capitalism*, etc.

On the other hand, together with an open evaluation of the same word, we may notice implicit evaluation, hidden inside the political discourse. A French linguist, Serio (1985), analysed the reports of the Communist party by N. Khrushchev (1961) and L. Brezhnev (1966). The analysis revealed two important characteristics of the Soviet political discourse: nominalisation and composition.

Nominalisation (using nouns that end with *-ation, -ment*, etc. instead of verbs) was enormously widespread in Soviet political discourse. For example: "The major source of the growth of the productivity of labour must be the heightening of the technical level of the production of the basics of development and implementing of the technique ...". The semantic result of these numerous nominalisations is the disappearance of the subject of the action. All processes lose personification. After the vanishing of the subject, all ideological manipulations may be easily performed.

"Composition" means that two or more notions, which outside the political discourse are not synonyms at all, are brought together (with or without a conjunction) into one concept, for example, *the party, the people – the party and the people*. As the result, the logical connection of these notions cannot be interpreted in an understandable way, for example, "the party, all the Soviet people", "the Comsomol, all the Soviet youth".

The result of this procedure is a semantic paradox. A large number of notions become synonyms. It creates an illusion that they really mean the same

in the reality, for example, *the party – the people – the government – the state – communists – the Soviet people*.

The process of making the Russian language political and ideological is depicted by Kupina (1995). She analysed the Russian Language Dictionary by D. N. Ushakov, which is considered the lexicographic memorial of the Soviet epoch. The ideological words in this dictionary form the sphere of totalitarianism in the language.

This period, in general, is characterised by the establishment of linguistic norms, which are dogmatic and encompass almost all spheres of the language. Media language becomes standard, official, and full of cliché. The written language prevails over everyday spoken language.

The prevailing tone of newspaper texts was elaborate and solemn.

The most popular and, as it seemed the most real, were the stories about the perfect reality and about even better future. The language, as I. Brodsky wrote about A. Platonov, may create an illusive world, and a nation may become “grammatically dependent” on it. There were standards of observation, coverage, commenting, which included phrases like “the flourishing of the material and spiritual life of the people”; “bring to life the historical predestination of the party”, etc. (Pospelova 1991)

According to Pospelova, this type of authorship concentrated ideological and political vectors of the epoch and determined the major features of press language. At the category of authorship, one feature is exaggerated. It is the social being with social thinking, who expresses the interests of the party and its ideology and politics. The individual in texts is almost absent. The collective “We” destroyed the personal “I”. It depicted political unity in thought and was reflected by means of speech.

The next period (1985-1991), called “perestroika”, brought fresh style to the newspaper. After a long-term period of cliché, unity, and officiousness, the newspaper becomes diverse in language, style, content, and ideology. The fall of censorship, ideological taboo, and style boundaries led to independence and diversity in newspaper language. Many processes in newspaper language may be explained as the reaction to the language of the past, as efforts to maintain distance from it.

Giving up the mono party system led to the newspaper boom. Newspapers of various ideological concepts appeared: communist, monarchist, even fascist, and, of course, democratic, which filled the space between ideological margins.

The general vector of changes may be called "democratisation of media language". The language of perestroika is a new style: Free thinking and free choice of language means giving up stereotypes. The newspaper vocabulary broadens. It takes words from spoken language and jargons.

The type of authorship also changes. The journalist of the perestroika period is free (often radical) thinking and an individual who fights for progress and democracy, and expresses himself in emotional speech, free of the stereotypes and clichés of the Soviet period.

Giving up the old style system (where the topic determined the linguistic means), perestroika creates a new style, which makes the journalist its center.

Coming to a new code, new principals of choosing and interpreting information, making texts individually bright, when there are little prohibitions – all these give new birth to a natural, lost at soviet times, feature of a newspaper, which is style diversity. This feature correlates with pluralism of thoughts (the diversity of individual, unsmoothed, unedited lexicons in the newspaper language). (Kakorina 1992, p. 15)

The short period of perestroika changed media language radically. The newspaper had to look for a new language to help society understand the new life. We suppose that the creation of the renewed language is the most important influence of press on the contemporary culture. This period initiated features which were further developed in the contemporary period (1990s – beginning of the 21st century).

The analysis of the conceptual vocabulary of the contemporary period (*democratisation, democratic change, reforms, course of reform, reformators, market, civil society, civil agreement, opposition, etc.*) shows that the content depicts the formation of a wide democratic ideology. Many economical terms were added to the active vocabulary (*credit, taxes, inflation, market, clearing, leasing, marketing, etc.*).

The evolution of evaluation language, which reflects the semantic development of the vocabulary, shows that society forms an attitude towards political and ideological facts, ideas, and events. However, these processes are very unstable. The general vector is weakening or neutralising the sharp positive or sharp negative evaluations of the past. In comparison with the previous period in the contemporary epoch, the sphere of evaluation is narrowing, and its level is decreasing.

The tendency towards information concentration prevails in contemporary newspapers. This is most evident in the evolution of genres and headlines.

Genres such as editorial, topical satire, and feature story are rarely used. The "pure" article and correspondence are replaced by articles where information prevails. The synthesis of different genres is taking place. We cannot speak of new-formed genres yet, but it is obvious that in the new texts the tendencies for information and personal expression are growing.

Authorship includes not only social features but also personal qualities. The diversity of features of an author's personality is increasing. The author is more flexible, friendly, and free. A journalist is an observing person, one who thinks but does not judge. The contemporary period represents a new authorship. In this category, the private person prevails. This corresponds with new social ideals.

Intensification of the informing function is revealed by the replacement of nouns by verbs.

The changes in newspaper style depict the decision to diverge from the dry, official language of the past. The tendency is to construct texts without obeying a tradition or using clichés. The type of information determines the style.

The major means of fighting officiousness is the use of everyday language, slang, and jargons.

The newspaper standard is broader than the literary standard and more tolerant to various nonliterary words. Touching the nonliterary language, the

newspaper works with this vocabulary, assimilates, and finally brings new words to literary language.

This process is not smooth sometimes. An enormously large number of jargon words in a newspaper makes the style weak and poor.

Nowadays, we are witnessing newspaper style development. The number of styles has grown. Newspapers are separated depending on their style. The genre system has changed radically. Evaluation development, the extension of the vocabulary is taking place; a new lexical system of the newspaper is being established.

This process influences literary language development, broadening its expressive potential, especially in the sphere of intellectual and emotionally evaluating means. Through the media, the changes are introduced to the contemporary language.

Concluding the analysis of the newspaper language development at the 20th century, I would like to emphasise the following issues:

Usually, the development of each period starts with the formation of a new type of authorship – evoked by external and internal linguistic factors –, which determines a new attitude towards reality and speech. The changes initially cover vocabulary, especially conceptual words. Textual modality, evaluation characteristics, the level of standardisation, and the measure of the author's change in self-expression determine the image of newspaper language.

The development proceeds smoothly, without revolutionary moments. The accumulation of the changes influences the speech quality and the vocabulary, but we cannot notice the gaps in the tradition.

The development has more than a single direction: It is not determined by an internal purpose, but it reflects the ideas of a particular period. The waves of democratisation and the waves of stabilisation (conservation) of newspaper language are well seen. Between these two margins lies the field where newspaper language development takes place. Newspaper language repeats

the evolution of the literary language, determined together with other factors by processes of automation and disautomation.

The analysis of newspaper language in the previous century allows the establishment of some general conclusions of development. The technique of speech improved; the fund of expressive formulas rose; the evaluation issues became more delicate and complicated, and the number of evaluation tones became richer. These factors are reasonable for speaking about the progress in newspaper language development.

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